

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the conference report to accompany S. 2943, National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017.

Mitch McConnell, Deb Fischer, Thom Tillis, Daniel Coats, James M. Inhofe, John Hoeven, Cory Gardner, Orrin G. Hatch, Mark Kirk, Tom Cotton, John Cornyn, Lindsey Graham, Mike Rounds, Lisa Murkowski, Dan Sullivan, John McCain.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum call be waived with respect to this cloture motion.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

COMMENDING THE SENIOR SENATOR FROM TENNESSEE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, before I give my remarks, as I planned, I wish to say a brief word about Senator ALEXANDER, the senior Senator from Tennessee.

During my time in Congress, he has always been one of the most pleasant people I have dealt with. He is always very thorough in whatever he wants to talk to you about, and I have found him to be a remarkably good Senator. He has a background that is stunningly important—a longtime Governor of the State of Tennessee and someone who has served in one of the Republican administrations as Secretary of Education.

This Cures bill is not everything I would wish it to be. I think it is too weak in some parts. I think we could have done better. But I have been around for a long time, and I understand what legislation is all about.

We have gotten money. We have been trying for a couple years to get money for opioids. There should be far more, and it should be given in a different way than we have it here, but it is money. We have people—as we are sitting here for a few minutes today—dying as a result of this scourge that is sweeping America. It is in Oklahoma, it is in Tennessee, and it is in places such as New Hampshire. It is all over. So that part of it is excellent.

As to the resources we give the National Institutes of Health, or NIH, there is not enough we can do. I would hope there would be much more. I am pleased to report that this is the beginning of the Moonshot that Senator BIDEN will lead in research to defeat cancer. It can be done. We have made tremendous progress, and we are making it on a monthly basis now.

There are a lot of good things in this legislation. One of the things that the

senior Senator from Tennessee and I have spoken about is clinical trials. Sometimes you don't understand the importance of those until they could personally affect you.

With the injury that I suffered almost 2 years ago, I am hopeful that in my lifetime there will be something done to be able to take care of retinas that are damaged. We have a lot of those that are damaged—a lot of retinas that are damaged as a result of diabetes and other maladies—but not a lot has been done on injuries to retinas. But there is work being done on that now.

I had a very good meeting on Saturday with one of the foremost people in the world dealing with retinas, Dr. Bressler of Johns Hopkins, and they are doing some stuff. They are doing stem cell work. They are doing some transplants. They are doing some good things.

On a very personal basis, Senator ALEXANDER came and talked to me one evening. He asked if I had time. Of course, I always have time for any Senator who wants to see me.

He came with tears in his eyes to talk to me about some things he had learned about people who had damaged their eyes and how some work is being done with these people who once could not see and, as in the Biblical passages, can now see.

It was a very wonderful meeting, and I had the opportunity to meet one individual he introduced me to—a man named Doug Oliver, who was basically blind. Because of work done with stem cells, he can now see. He is off disability, he can drive a car, and he can read. He could not do that before.

I appreciate it. It perhaps could have passed without him, but I doubt it, and I admire his legislative skills. I hope, with the new Congress coming, he will pull even those skills he doesn't have now out of his back pocket so perhaps we can do even more. There is going to be a lot more that needs to be done in the new Republican Congress.

So I express my public admiration to the senior Senator from Tennessee for the good work he has done for his State and for the country for many decades.

CELEBRATION AT STANDING ROCK

Mr. REID. Mr. President, in the bitter cold of a North Dakota December yesterday—and it can be cold up there—there was a celebration at Standing Rock. Why?

Along the banks of the Missouri River, in this heavy snow, there were hugs and tears of joy and drumming and dancing as the people of the Standing Rock Tribe and others heard the good news. The Army Corps of Engineers did not—did not—approve the easement for the Dakota Access oil pipeline. Instead, the Corps of Engineers determined that the pipeline must be rerouted. I am so glad. It is so important.

This is a victory for the Standing Rock Sioux. We know the long history

Native Americans have in the State of the Presiding Officer. We know that around the country—I have 26 Indian entities in Nevada—they have been treated so poorly. Nevada is no different from any other State. They were pushed off of the lands they dwelt on before we showed up, we White folks here in America. They have been pushed around. So when the Standing Rock people heard the good news that the Corps of Engineers had finally given them at least some small victory, it was very exciting for them. It is a victory for them. They have been objecting to this construction for more than 2 years.

The tribe was concerned about a number of issues, not the least of which were their ancestral grounds, some of which land has their ancestors buried there. They were afraid of water contamination and other problems.

In a statement to the press, the chairman of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe said:

We wholeheartedly support the decision of the administration and commend with the utmost gratitude the courage it took on the part of President Obama, the Army Corps, the Department of Justice and the Department of Interior to take steps to correct the course of history and do the right thing.

The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe and all of Indian country will be forever grateful to the Obama administration for this historic decision.

Indians have taken one loss after another. Rare are there any victories for the Indians.

I agree with the chairman of the tribe. This is a historic decision, and it was a momentous step toward correcting the course of a disgraceful history.

As I said last week here on the floor, the treatment of the Standing Rock Sioux by our government has been shameful—not only recently but for more than a century. The Sioux were pushed to reservations first. I say “reservations”—plural. But even that land was taken—most of it—and then massive dams were built that put the tribe's best farmland underwater. The result of these actions was a crippling poverty that plagued the tribe for generations—even this generation.

This mistreatment was not unique, as I have indicated, to Standing Rock. Indeed, there are tribes all across the Nation with very similar histories. We have them in Nevada.

Yesterday's decision will not make up for the past, but the President's action was a huge step toward correcting a terrible wrong. Money, profits, and not human dignity, was the direction of the pipeline. The Obama administration changed that.

For far too long, the pleas for justice for Native Americans have gone unanswered. At least now, on this occasion, the Standing Rock Sioux and Native Americans throughout this country know that someone is listening and their concerns are being addressed by the U.S. Government.

I admire the support of those who locked arms with the Standing Rock

Sioux. Appropriately enough, these people call themselves water protectors. Native Americans from all over America, politicians from all over America, entertainers from all over America, and other celebrities were some of the water protectors, and we must recognize the more than 2,000 veterans who traveled to Standing Rock from across America to protect the protestors from violence.

It is also important to note that speech after speech and demonstration after demonstration were peaceful. All the leaders of this demonstration said time after time after time that it would be peaceful, and it has been. The only aggression has not been from the Indians but from those people who are pushing the pipeline.

It is no surprise that many of these veterans are Native Americans because American Indians serve in our Nation's Armed Forces in greater numbers per capita than any other ethnic group. Going back to World War II, of course, the great Ira Hayes, who was made famous by Johnny Cash—they have a long history of serving in all of our wars and stepping forward.

I am gratified at the strength of the Standing Rock Sioux. Their ancestral burial grounds will remain protected and their water clean.

I thank President Obama and his administration and the Army Corps of Engineers for their action. This victory was the culmination of months and months of analysis and deliberation. I appreciate the conclusion reached.

But everyone should know that this fight isn't over. We know from long experience that our decisionmakers keel over for fossil fuel interests. We must remain vigilant. My only hope is that the Trump administration will not undo the justice the Native Americans have finally received. All of us must support the Standing Rock Sioux and help them protect their history and their land and their water.

As one aside, many decades ago I was the Lieutenant Governor of the State of Nevada, and we had our Lieutenant Governors' conference in Oklahoma. It was a wonderful week that we spent in Oklahoma. One of the highlights of that trip was an education that I received one night of a—I assume it is still going on; I don't know—a wonderful pageant that took place in a place that I believe is called Tahlequah—I believe that was the name of the place—where in such detail and in such magnificence was described how Oklahoma has so many Native Americans who came from Florida. It was a wonderful story. I was very impressed with the Native Americans whom I met and have met since that time in Oklahoma. And a memento I was given there in Oklahoma—frankly, someone stole it from me, but each one of us, each Lieutenant Governor, was given a little painting by a famous Oklahoman—at the time, at least—whose time was Tiger. I don't know what his real name was, but he was a famous artist. It was

a beautiful Indian scene he had painted. We all got one. It was an original. I am sorry someone took it out of my office. But I have fond memories of that convention in Oklahoma where I learned so much about the people of Oklahoma.

Some of us in the West have had over the years kind of a negative impression of Oklahoma—the Okies coming into California, all of these uneducated people causing trouble—but that was a wonderful trip to Oklahoma. I was terribly impressed at the time and have always been impressed with the people of Oklahoma.

Just a little aside here: I have had some good fortune at being able to legislate things here in Washington. One of the things that can be looked at as good or bad—and maybe I won't get a lot of pats on the back for this with the new administration—but a Senator from Oklahoma and I did some very good work. The Congressional Review Act was Reid-Nichols legislation. That was hard to do, but what it basically said is if there is a regulation promulgated by an administration, we as a Congress have an opportunity to look it over again to determine if, in fact, we have the ability, with enough folks, to overturn that regulation.

So, again, as the Presiding Officer is from Oklahoma, I want him to understand my affection for the State of Oklahoma and the people of Oklahoma. I have had some difficult tussles with people from Oklahoma over the years. There is no better example of that than Dr. Coburn. But having said that, I have never found more of a gentleman than Dr. Coburn. Even though we disagreed on some policy issues, he was always a gentleman and I have appreciated the things I learned from him.

I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

TSUNAMI WARNING, EDUCATION, AND RESEARCH ACT OF 2015

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the House message to accompany H.R. 34, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

House message to accompany H.R. 34, an act to authorize and strengthen the tsunami detection, forecast, warning, research, and mitigation program of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and for other purposes.

Pending:

McConnell motion to concur in the amendment of the House to the amendment of the Senate to the bill.

McConnell motion to concur in the amendment of the House to the amendment of the Senate to the bill, with McConnell amendment No. 5117, to change the enactment date.

McConnell amendment No. 5118 (to amendment No. 5117), of a perfecting nature.

McConnell motion to refer the message of the House on the bill to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions, with instructions, McConnell amendment No. 5119, to change the enactment date.

McConnell amendment No. 5120 (to the instructions (amendment No. 5119) of the motion to refer), of a perfecting nature.

McConnell amendment No. 5121 (to amendment No. 5120), of a perfecting nature.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

REMEMBERING JAMES TANCILL LYONS

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to Jim Lyons, a longtime staffer on Capitol Hill—my staffer—and a fixture in tax policy here in DC, who passed away on September 29 of this year.

James Tancill Lyons was born on March 7, 1973, to Stephen and Ann Lyons, both natives of the DC-Virginia area with longstanding ties to the local community. Growing up in Springfield, VA, Jim was an accomplished athlete, excelling in both baseball and basketball. Oddly, for a sports fan in the DC area, his favorite football team was the Dallas Cowboys—a decision he made consciously because his older brother, Stephen, was a big Redskins fan.

Jim was also a great student, eventually graduating summa cum laude from James Madison University. He went to law school at the University of Texas, where he made the Editing Committee of the Texas Journal of Business Law and won a scholarship for being the best tax law student in his class after pulling the top grade in his business associations, income tax, international tax, corporate tax, and estate and gift tax classes.

After law school, he earned a clerkship at the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals and then got a job working for Cleary Gottlieb, one of the finest law firms in the country. Of course, you would never guess any of this if you knew Jim. While he was always an incredibly valuable and often brilliant attorney and congressional staffer, he talked about his college and law school days as though he spent most of his time having fun and just barely skating by. That, of course, was vintage Jim Lyons—incredibly outgoing but unbelievably humble.

Jim could have a long conversation with anyone about pretty much anything, but he was never one to spend all that much time touting his own accomplishments. Make no mistake, Jim Lyons was very accomplished. After his time at the law firm in New York, Jim made his way to the House Ways and Means Committee, and, following a brief subsequent and successful stint at the Department of Justice, he was hired by Chairman CHUCK GRASSLEY to serve as tax counsel on the Senate Finance Committee.

In his 8 years on the Finance Committee, he made a mark on every major tax bill, not to mention a number of debt and budget deals that went through the Senate, including many tax-extenders bills, some of which he seemed to be able to cobble together singlehandedly.